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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the ways in which Chinese-born speakers of English and American-born speakers of English differed or were similar in their responses to compliments on: (1) ability; (2) appearance; and (3) possessions. Subjects were 15 Chinese and 15 American individuals, controlled for gender and status. Subjects were asked to write their responses to hypothetical compliments given in 18 specified situations. Responses were classified in five categories: acceptance; positive elaboration; neutral elaboration; negative elaboration; and denial. Results showed significant differences in the two cultural groups. In most situations, the Chinese-born English speakers resorted to negative elaboration and denial while American-born English speakers resorted to positive elaboration. The findings suggest that both groups were frequently placed in uncomfortable situations in the compliment/response sequence. Implications for behavior of individuals in multicultural situations in international business and politics are examined. (MSE)

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# A Pilot Study of Compliment Responses of American-born English Speakers and Chinese-born English Speakers

by

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and

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1993

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the difference between L1 Chinese English speakers and L1 American English speakers in the speech act of response to compliment. Cultural differences led researchers to suspect that the responses of the Chinese English speakers would vary in length and nature from the American English speakers. Data was gathered from 15 Chinese subjects and 15 American subjects. Controls for gender and status were exercised.

A Discourse Completion Test was administered in person to two groups of women. Three areas of compliments were used to elicit responses: ability, appearance and possessions.

Responses were classified into five categories: acceptance, positive elaboration, neutral elaboration, negative elaboration and denial. These were summarized by frequencies according to the three compliment types. Percentages were compared.

The results showed significant differences in the responses of the two groups. In the majority of situations, the Chinese-born English speakers resorted to negative elaboration and denial while the American-born English speakers resorted to positive elaboration. Such findings indicated that both groups of speakers were frequently placed in uncomfortable situations in the compliment/response sequence. Considerations are of value to ESL teachers and those in multi-cultural positions, international business and politics.

## INTRODUCTION

All cultures are different. Their peoples vary in the values they embrace, the lives they lead and in the thinking that inspires the language they use. When learning a second language, the student is taught syntax, phonology and lexicon. This allows the learner to "use" a language, but in order to fit comfortably into a new culture with a second language, an individual must understand how the language functions (Yang, 1989; Wolfson, 1983).

Even advanced learners make errors when it comes to discerning the purpose of a speech act (Wolfson, 1989). Cross-cultural differences can turn a compliment into an insult. For example, in China, weight gain is a sign of good fortune and contentment (Yang, 1989), while in the United States, being slim and fit is the aim for health and appearance. Consequently, the appropriateness of weight gain as a compliment topic varies between Chinese and American cultures. Part of pragmalinguistic competence involves the topics which may inspire a compliment. They must be valued by the culture indicated (Holmes, 1987; Brown, 1987; Manes, 1983). Learning pragmatics, the "rules of speaking" is essential to successful operation in the target language (Hymes, 1972).

In America, the compliment is often used for maintaining social harmony and for sustaining social interaction (Celce-Murcia, 1991). As a multifunctional speech act, it can show gratitude, open or close a conversation, soften a criticism or request (Billmyer, 1990; Brown and Levinson, 1978; Wolfson, 1983). For this reason, there is a high frequency of compliments in American English, which is a clearly marked

feature of the language, even in English-speaking cultures (Holmes, 1987).

The Chinese culture values humility and modesty (Clayre, 1985; De Mante 1989). Innate constraints require the recipient of a compliment to avoid self-praise. No matter how delighted one may feel, he/she is expected to be modest and restrain any outward sign of pleasure. Yang (1987:26) notes, "To respond to a compliment as Americans do would be considered arrogant." For the Chinese, the compliment is a carefully controlled speech act with specific purpose.

Compliments on appearance are unusual for the Chinese because the value system places most emphasis on work and study and the efforts involved with them. Both American and Chinese cultures use compliments of performance but even here there is a significant difference in frequency. Yang's research (1987) shows that 21 examples of performance compliments were observed in the United States in one month's time, but only 4 performance compliments were observed in China in the same amount of time.

For the American, the "least preferred" type of compliment response is rejection or denial (Billmyer, 1990). For the Chinese, the correct response is "No, No, No." The form shows modesty and was observed in Yang's research (1987). Another common Chinese response which troubles the American is the assertion, "It is my duty," which contrasts with American responses such as "It's a pleasure" or " You're welcome." Many Americans are probably not aware that the values of duty and responsibility are held higher than providing pleasure in the Chinese society (Yang, 1987). Wolfson (1989:15) cites, " If there is anything universal about the rules of

speaking, it is the tendency of members of one speech community to judge the speech behavior of others by their own standards."

Cultural values are a part of speech which have serious sociolinguistic implications. The L1 Chinese speaker is frequently confused by what may seem a profusion of compliments by the Americans. In turn, Americans, who are used to frequent compliments often feel disappointed and ignored when no compliments are forthcoming from the Chinese. The typical Chinese response to compliments such as denials and assertions of responsibility may cause uncomfortable misunderstandings in Americans who may feel that their good intentions are being unappreciated and their judgement questioned.

The question to be considered is how do compliment responses differ between Chinese-born English speakers (CEs) and American-born English speakers (AEs). The hypotheses set forth in this paper are as follows:

1) Chinese-born English speaking women will differ from American-born English speaking women in their compliment responses. Chinese-born English speakers will resort to negative elaboration while American-born English speakers will resort to positive elaboration.

2) Compliment responses will differ according to the categories of appearance, ability and possessions.

## METHOD

### Subjects

#### Chinese-born Subjects

The Chinese-born subjects consisted of fifteen L1 Mandarin speaking females from The People's Republic of China who attended various Chinese churches in Flushing, New York. Among them, five were undergraduate students, six were graduate students, two were working adults ( 1 insurance agent and 1 accountant) and three were housewives. All of them had a college education. Their ages ranged from 20 to 33 years. The mean age was 26. Their length of stay in the United States ranged from three months to two years with a mean of nine months. Previous English instruction received by the Chinese-born subjects ranged from six to seven years in Chinese high school and college programs. Such programs consisted mainly of grammar and translations, with little training in speaking and writing.

#### American-born Subjects

The American-born subjects consisted of fifteen L1 American-English speaking females from the various counties and boroughs of and around New York City. All of them spoke English exclusively. All were second generation Americans who had spent no extended lengths of time in any other country. Eight had a Bachelor's degree, two had graduate degrees and five had one or two years of college education.

Their ages ranged from 22 to 35 with a mean age of 28. The American subjects were all from the New York Metropolitan area. Six were from Queens, three from Manhattan, three from Nassau County and three from Suffolk County. One was a full time student with several part-time jobs, one was a mother and the remainder were as follows: 1 reading teacher, 1 elementary education teacher, 1 gymnastics instructor, 2 real estate agents, 1 television programming assistant, 1 administration assistant, 1 nurse, 1 bookkeeper, 1 tax preparer, 1 dental technician, 1 radiation technician and 1 secretary.

**Materials**

The Discourse Completion Test which consisted of 18 questions was administered to 15 American-born and 15 Chinese-born female English speakers during a period of seven weeks. The test was designed to elicit compliment responses by setting up a situation in a few sentences after which a compliment was given. The subject then was asked to reply. The compliments given were strong representatives of this particular speech act so the subjects would be completely assured of the compliment aspect. The test controlled for high, equal and low status relationships equally. The compliments fall into the three categories of appearance, ability and possessions. The six questions in each category are represented below. (See Appendix B for the classification of Discourse Completion Test responses according to topic category, status of compliment receiver and situation).

**TABLE 1. CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSE COMPLETION TEST ACCORDING TO TOPIC CATEGORY AND STATUS OF COMPLIMENT RECEIVER**

| Ability/Accomplishments | | Appearance | | Possessions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DCT item # | Status of compliment receiver | DCT Item # | Status of compliment receiver | DCT item # | Status of compliment receiver |
| 1,13 | equal | 9,16 | equal | 6,11 | equal |
| 5,7 | higher | 12,14 | higher | 3,18 | higher |
| 10,17 | lower | 2,4 | lower | 8,15 | lower |

**Procedures**

In order to eliminate possible effects of other variables such as sex, country of origin, previous training in English and length of residence in the United States, all the subjects were interviewed by the researchers prior to the administration of the Discourse Completion Test. Due to the length of the test, the researchers found it necessary to administer the DCT to both Chinese and American subjects. This was accomplished by reading the Discourse Completion Test to the subjects individually and recording their answers. Subjects were instructed to listen to the situations and to respond naturally and quickly as they would in a real life situation.

Because of the difficulty of obtaining subjects, the environmental conditions were not controlled for. While some women were tested in a college cafeteria, others were tested in a church, an office or in a home. Many of the potential subjects refused to partake in the test, about one quarter dropped out. Several Chinese-born subjects seemed intimidated by the test and its motives which researchers were not permitted

to discuss. Researchers did not respond to additional questions about the situations in the test.

The results were reviewed and tabulated according to category and type of response. The responses were divided into five functional categories -- acceptance, positive elaboration, neutral elaboration, negative elaboration and denial. The token or ritual " Thank you" used alone was classified as part of acceptance. Difficulty arose classifying " Thank you " with elaborations when the assumption was made that this expression meant acceptance. Many Chinese-born respondents would say " Thank you" out of politeness and then proceed to deny, minimize or downgrade the compliment. A more elaborate description of the categories and examples is available in the Analysis Section of this paper.

**ANALYSIS**

The results of the study were tallied in a tabulation form which categorized compliment responses in five areas according to the three categories of ability, appearance and possessions (See Appendix B. Tabulation Form.) Various studies on compliments (Billmyer, 1990; Sims, 1989; Wolfson, 1981) and responses were appraised along with this study's purpose to arrive at the five categories listed below.

Acceptance--ritual thank you, i.e. agreement with no further elaboration, e.g. "Thank you." "I think so too." "I'm glad you like it."

Positive Elaboration--account, history, positive comment, efforts, return of compliment, e.g. "I bought it at Macy's." " Red is my favorite color." "I worked very hard on the project." "I like yours too."

Neutral Elaboration--seeking confirmation or shift of credit, e.g." Really?" "Do you think so?" " My assistant selected them."

Negative Elaboration--downgrading, duty or responsibility, need for improvement, e.g." The house is a bit too small for us." "I still need a lot of improvement." "It's my responsibility."

Denial--no, negative opinion. e.g." No, not at all." "No, my baby is ugly."

The types of responses for the two subject groups for appearance, ability and possessions were analyzed and compared according to the functional categories listed above. Tabulations were examined for their relation to the hypothesis that

Chinese-born women will differ from American-born women in response to compliments. Comparisons were made and percentages were calculated within and across the categories. The total responses were also calculated.

## RESULTS

### Total Responses:

The results of the analysis of total responses are presented in Table 2.

**TABLE 2 SUMMARY OF FREQUENCIES OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSE TYPES**

| Type of Response | AE* | | CE* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N* | % | N* | % |
| Acceptance | 66 | (24%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| Positive elaboration | 185 | (69%) | 39 | (14%) |
| Neutral elaboration | 10 | ( 4%) | 43 | (16%) |
| Negative elaboration | 6 | ( 2%) | 114 | (42%) |
| Denial | 3 | ( 1%) | 74 | (27%) |
| Total | 270 | (100%) | 270 | (100%) |

*AE = American-born female English speakers
*CE = Chinese-born female English speakers
*N = Number of responses
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As shown in Table 2, there are vast differences between the frequencies of compliment response types given by American-born and Chinese-born English speakers in this study. The most prevalent pattern of the American responses was characterized by positive elaboration, e.g. positive opinion, account, return of compliment (N = 185, 69%). Only fourteen percent of Chinese compliment replies (N = 39) were found in this category. The most common response type given by the Chinese-born English speakers was characterized by negative elaboration, e.g. downgrading, sense of duty, need for improvement (N = 114, 42%)--a frequency level which contrasts sharply with the low rate of 1.1% of the American-born women's responses. Chinese and American subjects in this study also varied significantly in the use of other compliment response types such as acceptance (American 24% vs.

Chinese 0%) and denial (American responses 4% vs. Chinese 27%). The Chinese subjects also gave more neutral elaboration (16%) than the American subjects (4%) by shifting credit or seeking confirmation in their response to compliments. The above results are consistent with the hypothesis of this study that the Chinese-born English speakers will differ from the American-born English speakers in their responses to compliments with the former choosing negative response types to adhere to the ideals of humility (Cheng, 1987; De Mente, 1989; Yang, 1987) and the latter employing positive elaboration to facilitate further interchange and social interaction (Billmyer, 1990).

**Responses According to Topic Categories:**

**Response to Compliments Pertaining to Appearance**

The cross cultural differences in social values are closely related to the differences of types of responses chosen by the American and Chinese subjects in this study. Since personal appearance is highly valued in American society (Manes, 1983), it is one of the most frequent topics of compliments (Knapp, 1984). In contrast, "Chinese people do not consider good looks as a great virtue" (Yang 1987:25) and are often embarrassed by compliments on appearance which are rarely given in China. Consequently, the predominant pattern of Chinese-born women's responses in this category is denial (62%), e.g. "I am already very old" (DCT #2) "She/He is such an ugly baby" (DCT #9). This is a great departure from the high rate of acceptance (28%) and positive elaboration (66%) responses given by American-born women such as " Thanks. I try my best to keep in shape" (DCT #2), and "Yes, She is an adorable little thing." (DCT #9). The shift of the majority of CE's responses to the denial category narrowed the gap in the negative elaboration category (AE 2%, CE 8%). The frequently used response by the Chinese subjects in this study,"Really?" accounted for the considerable difference in the neutral elaboration category (AE 4%, CE 19%). The responses of the two subject groups are reported in Table 3.

**TABLE 3 FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES TO COMPLIMENTS PERTAINING TO APPEARANCE**

| Type of Response | AE* | | CE* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N* | % | N* | % |
| Acceptance | 25 | (28%) | 0 | (0 %) |
| Positive elaboration | 59 | (66%) | 10 | (11%) |
| Neutral elaboration | 4 | ( 4%) | 17 | (19%) |
| Negative elaboration | 2 | ( 2%) | 7 | ( 8%) |
| Denial | 0 | ( 0%) | 56 | (62%) |
| Total | 90 | (100%) | 90 | (100%) |

*AE = American-born female English speakers
*CE = Chinese-born female English speakers
*N = Number of responses
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Responses to Compliments Pertaining to Ability**

Although ability and accomplishments are highly valued both in American and Chinese society, compliments are seldom given by Chinese except for exceptional performance (Yang, 1987). Two negative elaboration formulas-- "It is my duty," "I still need a lot of improvement" were commonly used by the Chinese-born subjects in this study (59%) in response to compliments on ability (DCT #1, 13, 5, 10, 17). These types of responses were nonexistent in AE's responses which emphasized personal efforts, pride, etc. as positive elaboration strategy (68%). This finding is consistent with Yang's data (1987) supporting the influence of cultural ideals of modesty, sense of duty, etc. in negative compliment responses made by the Chinese-born English speakers. The results of analysis of compliment responses in the ability category are shown in Table 4.

**TABLE 4 FREQUENCIES OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES PERTAINING TO ABILITY**

| Type of Response | AE* | | CE* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N* | % | N* | % |
| Acceptance | 25 | (28%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| Positive elaboration | 61 | (68%) | 13 | (14%) |
| Neutral elaboration | 3 | ( 3%) | 14 | (16%) |
| Negative elaboration | 1 | ( 1%) | 53 | (59%) |
| Denial | 0 | ( 0%) | 10 | (11%) |
| Total | 90 | (100%) | 90 | (100%) |

*AE = American-born female English speakers
*CE = Chinese-born female English speakers
*N = Number of responses
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

**Responses to Compliments Pertaining to Possessions**

Table 5 shows a slightly higher percentage (18%) of positive elaboration responses made by the Chinese subjects to possession-related compliments comparing to their replies to ability-related compliments (14%) and appearance-related compliments (11%). The polarization of positive elaboration in AE responses (65%) and negative elaboration (60%) in CE responses remain constant. The negative elaboration replies made by CE consisted mainly of downgrading and minimization in this category, whereas AE's positive elaboration provided accounts and positive opinions of items complimented.

**TABLE 5 FREQUENCIES OF RESPONSES TO COMPLIMENTS PERTAINING TO POSSESSIONS**

| Type of Response | AE* | | CE* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N* | % | N* | % |
| Acceptance | 16 | (18%) | 0 | ( 0%) |
| Positive elaboration | 65 | (72%) | 16 | (18%) |
| Neutral elaboration | 3 | ( 3%) | 12 | (13%) |
| Negative elaboration | 3 | ( 3%) | 54 | (60%) |
| Denial | 3 | ( 3%) | 8 | ( 9%) |
| Total | 90 | (100%) | 90 | (100%) |

*AE = American-born female English speakers
*CE = Chinese-born female English speakers
*N = Number of responses
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

As shown in Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5, there have been consistent polarizations of AE and CE's responses in all three categories (appearance, ability, possessions). In Table 6, the differences according to topic categories can be evidenced.

**TABLE 6 PERCENTAGE OF COMPLIMENT RESPONSES ACCORDING TO TOPIC CATEGORIES**

| | Ability | | Appearance | | Possessions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | AE | CE | AE | CE | AE | CE |
| Positive (Acceptance + Positive elaboration) | 96% | 14% | 94% | 11% | 91% | 18% |
| Neutral | 3% | 16% | 4% | 19% | 3% | 13% |
| Negative (Negative elaboration + Denial) | 1% | 70% | 2% | 70% | 6% | 69% |

*AE = American-born female English speakers
*CE = Chinese-born female English speakers
Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Several major findings are apparent. While American English speakers were most positive in their responses to ability-related compliments (96%), Chinese English speakers were most positive in responses to possession-related compliments (18%). Overall, a high rate of denial and negative elaboration responses indicating downgrading or rejection were received from Chinese English speakers (69%-70%). The most negative responses given by Chinese English speakers were responses related to appearance compliments since within the 70% negative responses 62% were denials. American subjects showed a tendency to downgrade more in the response to compliments of possessions (6%) than other categories (ability 1%, appearance 2%). Furthermore, there are significant differences in the unique semantic formulas found in the CE's responses which are rarely present in AE's responses. These include assertion of a need for improvement, and a sense of duty or responsibility in response to ability related compliments and denial in response to appearance related compliments. There are also differences in the neutral response category. Chinese subjects' responses showed a higher rate (19%) in neutral responses to appearance-related compliments with the use of the formula, "Really?" They showed a tendency to shift credit in response to compliments of ability (16%). American subjects in this study showed low rates (4%, 3% respectively) in these two categories.

The above findings are consistent with the original hypothesis set forth that Chinese-born female English speakers would differ from American-born

female English speakers in compliment responses, with Chinese-born speakers resorting to negative elaboration while Americans favoring positive elaboration. Furthermore, certain findings in this study also evidenced differences in their responses to the different topic categories of appearance, ability and possessions.

## DISCUSSION

The overall findings of this study revealed a significant difference in responses to compliments between Chinese-born and American-born English speakers. In the majority of situations Chinese-born English speakers resorted to negative elaboration (42%) and denial (27%) while American-born English speakers resorted to positive elaboration (69%).

The differences in the categories of appearance, ability and possessions for compliment responses of American-born women were so small as to be inconsequential. Chinese-born women used negative elaboration 59% of the time for abilities and 60% for possessions, while they used it only 8% of the time for appearance. For ability and possessions, they used denial 11% and 9%, but for appearance they used denial 62% of the time which would indicate that they were less comfortable with compliments of appearance. This is also supported by Yang (1987).

These findings leave speakers of both cultures in uncomfortable situations. While the American frequently awaits for the positive elaboration and conversational indicator that is often part of the compliment/response exchange, the Chinese often struggles to discern the real purpose and meaning of the compliment or resorts to negative elaboration. Neither compliment or response is well received for its original intention.

A method must be found which allows the responses of the ESL learners to remain in tune with the values of their respective culture while still enabling them to function in a second culture and language. These considerations are of special value to teachers, those in multi-cultural positions and foreign business and political dealings. In America's melting pot, where stereotyping and cultural problems arise daily, this information is of value to all. It is not enough for the foreign-born to be instructed in the L2. Cultural awareness is a two-sided issue which should also involve the American-born.

Further investigation of compliment responses should consider variables such as gender, age and status. Interlanguage differences regarding compliments would also prove interesting. It would be advantageous to explore this speech act of Chinese-born senior citizens who have resided here for many years and the young Chinese-born to see how language has evolved for their use.

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## APPENDIX A

## DISCOURSE COMPLETION TEST

Please read the following situations and incomplete dialogues. Fill in your natural response in the blank space following "You:".

1. As usual, the exhibition of your recent paintings has drawn a large crowd. One of your friends congratulates you.

Friend: I have been admiring your paintings. They are beautiful. You are so talented!

You:

2. You are at a party with your daughter at a friend's house. Your friend introduces both of you to her mother.

Her Mother: For a moment, I thought you were sisters. You look much too young to have such a beautiful, grown-up daughter.

You:

3. You are having a summer outdoor party for your employees. One of your employees admires your garden.

Employee: You have such a beautiful garden, you must have put a lot of work into it.

You:

4. You've just returned to work from a vacation in Hawaii. Your boss comments on your appearance.

Boss: I can see you had a good vacation. You look great!

You:

5. You are a famous professor of anthropology. You are invited as a guest speaker for a group of graduate students. The host introduces you.

Host: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to present to you this honored guest. I consider her to be one of the most fascinating and informative authorities on anthropology.

You:

6. You just bought a house. You've spent a lot of time and money decorating it. Many of your friends have come to your open house party.

Friend: What a great new house! I really like the way you've decorated it.

You:

7. You are one of the presenters in a seminar. One of your students compliments you after your presentation.

Student: I really enjoyed your presentation. It was both interesting and inspiring.

You:

8. Your boss accidentally locks his/her keys in his/her car. You offer to drive him/her home to get the other set.

Boss: Is your car new? It's really very nice.

You:

9. You just had a baby girl and are resting at home. Your friends come to visit you and the new baby.

Friend: Let me look at the little angel. Oh, what an adorable baby!

You:

10. You have been working very hard on your new job in an advertising firm. Your boss calls you into his/her office for your first performance evaluation meeting.

Boss: I have been very pleased with your job performance during this first year. You are an excellent worker.

You:

11. You are at your uncle's 60th birthday party. Your cousin comments about your diamond earrings.

Cousin: I love your earrings. They're really gorgeous!

You:

12. You have been invited to your son's house Saturday evening for dinner. On entering the house, your daughter-in-law compliments your new hair style.

Daughter-in-law: Mom, I just love your hair! It makes you look ten years younger.

You:

13. You got a 98 on your midterm. The instructor reads one of your essays to the class. One of your classmates congratulates you.

Classmate: You must have done a great job on the midterm. Your essay was so good.

You:

14. You are the top executive in an insurance firm. You tell your administrative assistant that you are wearing your new contact lenses instead of your old galsses today.

Administrative assistant: Gee, you really look very nice with your new contact lenses.

You:

15. You are visiting with your friend at her house. Her mother remarks about your new coat.

Friend's mother: That's a lovely coat. What a nice color!

You:

16. You run into an old friend at the supermarket. You haven't seen each other for five years.

Friend: Oh my goodness! I haven't seen you for years. You look wonderful!

You:

17.You have put much effort into your research paper. You go to see your instructor. She/he gives back your report.

Instructor: This is an excellent report. You've done a fine job!

You:

18. You are a doctor. You have just relocated to a new office. One of your patients remarks about your office.

Patient: I really like your new office, especially the cheerful paintings!

You:

## APPENDIX B

## RESPONSES TO COMPLIMENTS

## TABULATION FORM

| Compliment category | Status of compliment receiver | DCT # | Topic of compliment | Response type/Semantic formula | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Acceptance | | Positive Elaboration | | Neutral Elaboration | | Negative Elaboration | | Denial | |
| | | | | AE | CE | AE | CE | AE | CE | AE | CE | AE | CE |
| Ability/ Accomplishments | equal | 1 | talented artist | | | | | | | | | | |
| | equal | 13 | great job on the midterm | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 5 | authority on anthropology | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 7 | inspiring presentation | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 10 | excellent performance | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 17 | excellent report | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Appearance | equal | 9 | beautiful baby | | | | | | | | | | |
| | equal | 16 | look wonderful | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 12 | new haircut | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 14 | look nice with new contacts | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 2 | young-looking mother | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 4 | look great after vacation | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Possessions | equal | 6 | new house | | | | | | | | | | |
| | equal | 11 | diamond earrings | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 3 | beautiful garden | | | | | | | | | | |
| | higher | 18 | beautiful paintings | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 8 | nice car | | | | | | | | | | |
| | lower | 15 | lovely coat | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | | | | | | | |